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DEPARTMENT FOR D, AF A/S JENDAYI FRAZER, AF/SPG, SE  
WILLIAMSON, NSC FOR BPITTMAN AND CHUDSON

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TAGS: [EAID](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [UN](#) [AU](#) [SU](#)  
SUBJECT: POTENTIAL ABYEI BORDER MOVES NORTH WITH SOME MAJOR  
CAVEATS

REF: A. KHARTOUM 281  
[1](#)B. KHARTOUM 276  
[1](#)C. KHARTOUM 256

Classified By: CDA Alberto M. Fernandez, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

1.(C) Summary: According to Foreign Minister Deng Alor, there is slow, albeit tortuous, progress in inching towards a solution on the contentious issue of Sudan's powderkeg region of Abyei. Such potential progress would include separating oil revenue from land/border issues, creating a new state for the Misseriyya Arabs and border adjustments. The Minister, an Abyei native, asked for increased US development assistance for the region. End summary.

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POSSIBLE ABYEI BORDER CREEPS NORTH  
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[1](#)2. (C) Sudanese Foreign Minister (and Abyei native) Deng Alor briefed SE Richard Williamson on February 29 on the latest National Congress Party (NCP) proposal to solve the issue of Sudan's conflictive and oil-rich Abyei region, the one part of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement which has seen zero formal progress to date. Alor was going to fly to Juba the next day to brief First Vice President Salva Kiir of the latest NCP offer which had been relayed to Alor during a lengthy meeting with the NCP's chief negotiator for Abyei, State Minister for Humanitarian Affairs (and indicted ICC war criminal) Ahmed Haroun.

[1](#)3. (C) Alor pulled out the detailed maps used in the negotiations and explained that since his return from the US on February 22, there had been constant, almost daily meetings on Abyei between the NCP and SPLM. Despite very real tensions (reftels), the gap was closing with the NCP asserting that they really do want to arrive at an interim solution for Abyei and to do so need to separate the issue of land from the issue of oil revenues. They suggested that the overwhelming bulk of the revenues from the region (92 percent, which means the 42 percent that should go to South Sudan and the 50 percent for the national government) be placed in a special fund to be used for infrastructure, such as roads connecting North and South Sudan, that could help make unity attractive. The remaining 8 percent would still go, per the Abyei Protocol in the CPA, to the Misseriyya Arabs, Ngok Dinka, and Northern Bahr al-Ghazal and Western Kordofan states. Alor said that Salva Kiir was not opposed per se to the oil arrangement but this needed to be discussed by a technical committee.

[1](#)4. (C) The map Alor showed to Special Envoy Williamson marked the NCP's initial position in the deep south of Abyei and

showed how the often intense and acrimonious negotiations over the past months had shifted it steadily north. The latest proposed border uses most of the "blue line" (10/10 latitude) of the Abyei Border Commission (ABC) Report and foresees the interim border eventually reaching the "red line" (10/22 latitude) of the ABC Report "with a few exceptions". The NCP's conditional acceptance of this line is combined with Khartoum being able to re-adjust the lines of Kordofan state in order to carve out a new state for the Misseriyya Arabs. This may require delicate talks between the Misseriyya and the neighboring Nuba (many of whom are SPLM supporters themselves) because of conflicting land claims.

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BUT THE DEVIL'S IN THE DETAILS  
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15. (C) The "exceptions" or concerns of the NCP on the borderline still focus on three areas of Abyei: the mostly Arab (Humr Fayareen) area of El-Meiram in the NW corner south of the blue line, the potential oil-rich area, near the center of the red line, of Nyama, and the oil-rich Heglig area south-east of the blue line. Haroun told Alor that it was in the SPLM's interest to exclude El-Meriam from Abyei because its Arab inhabitants will not vote in favor of separation at the 2011 referendum, while the Heglig area was subject to competing claims from neighboring states including the Unity state in the south. Heglig's borders somehow would need to be tied to the ongoing work of the Border Commission establishing the actual border between North and South Sudan based on the 1956 line. SE Williamson asked Alor why would the NCP concede now on the Abyei border, as they seem to be doing, and Alor said "it is because of you, the Americans, they know that if they want a deal with you they will have to

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fix Abyei." CDA Fernandez warned Alor that expecting Heglig to be solved by the Border Commission, which already has major problems to deal with, could be very problematic.

16. (C) Alor said that some SPLM negotiators, like Cabinet Affairs Minister Pagan Amun, agreed with Haroun's reasoning on El-Meriam but wanted to play hardball on Heglig. Alor said that since an interim administration for Abyei (in the form of Edward Lino and his staff) is now in place in Abyei town, he really wanted "our friends in USAID" to provide much needed development assistance for the region. He joked that SPLM Blue Nile State Governor Malik Agar would grab all the US assistance targeting border areas for himself if he could get away with it.

17. (C) Comment: While the Abyei region remains a real tinderbox, the Minister's comments show that the promise of a solution on Abyei, the last remaining CPA protocol with zero implementation, is actually possible. The NCP has steadily, if grudgingly, adjusted a potential northern border northward essentially conceding the borders of the region while still trying to hold on to current (Heglig) and future (Nyama) oil revenues. But nothing is set in stone yet. The idea of an infrastructure fund is intriguing but probably represents a disguised effort by the NCP to loot South Sudan's share (42 percent) of oil proceeds. Of course, the NCP is currently pumping as much oil as it can out of Abyei and pocketing 100 percent of the proceeds. While setting up a state administration for the Misseriyya may make good political sense and could mollify them to accept concessions on Abyei, it could also ignite tensions with the neighboring Nuba people in Southern Kordofan creating still another nasty little war in Sudan. End comment.

18. (U) SE Williamson did not have an opportunity to clear this cable before his departure.  
FERNANDEZ